



Lord Jagannath's big round eyes and smiling face are seen today all over the world. Thanks to the work of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, millions of people today attend his annual chariot festival known as *Ratha-yātrā*, not only in Puri, but in scores of countries around the world. So who is this Lord Jagannath? Ask that question to a couple dozen of his followers and you may very well get a couple dozen unique answers. Why is he conceived of in so many different ways? And, most importantly for the followers of the darling son of Mother Sachi, what was Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's conception of Jagannath and what is the nature of the special relationship Sri Gauranga Sundara shared with the Lord of the blue mountain?

The *Nilādri-mahodaya* is a Sanskrit *sthala-purāṇa*, local scripture, that focuses on the worship and history of Lord Jagannath. It is considered by the *paṇḍās*, priests of the Puri temple, to be the highest authority on temple rituals. It describes Jagannath as *sarva-rūpa-dhara* — "he who assumes all forms".

Amongst different deities in the Vedic tradition, Jagannath in Puri has the largest variety of worshipers in the world. The *Ratha-yātrā* festival attracts around one million people.¹

By attending this event, one can witness first-hand just how diverse are the

devotees of this deity: At the beginning of the festival, the current *Śaṅkarācārya* of Puri performs a special worship of the Lord on the chariot. His conception is that Jagannath is a manifestation of the impersonal brahman. Looking around, one will find pilgrims from a large variety of sects. You'll see Ramanandi Vaishnavas, who consider Jagannath to be a form of Lord Ramachandra. There are groups of *vaiṣṇavas* attending who consider Jagannath to be a form of Nrisimhadev. There are also *Rāmānuja* and *Madhva* devotees who see him as Narayan, while others, such as members of the *Nimbārka* and *Gauḍiya sampradāyas*, regard him as Sri Krishna. In attendance are *Śaivaites*, devotees of Lord Shiva, who consider Jagannath to be a form of Shiva. Some devotees identify him with their worshipable Ganesh. In Orissa, there are even some Christians and followers of Islam who support the worship of Lord Jagannath. It is also a tradition for various politicians and movie stars to attend *Ratha-yātrā*. What is their conception? Many of them see him as a cultural symbol of traditional India.

Head of State

In most places in the world, one is greeted everywhere with pictures of popular movie stars and sports



Photos by Sri Govinda Das

Jagannath's face and name is found everywhere in Orissa

personalities. However, in Orissa, it is mostly Jagannath's face that smiles serenely at you from billboards, buses, train stations, TV's, etc., etc. Shops and products are commonly named after Jagannath, his temple, his fellow deities, or his round enchanting eyes, Chaka-dola.

Historically, Jagannath has long been the official *rāṣṭra-devatā*, state deity of Orissa. In 1211 AD, the Gajapati King Maharaja Anangabhima III declared himself to be the *rāuta*, deputy, and Jagannath the real king. Maharaja Anangabhima even renounced his royal ceremonial bath that is part of the inauguration ritual for kings. Following this principle, the kings after Anangabhima publicly took a subordinate position to Jagannath, who was considered to be the real head of state.

In his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.1.160), Srila Sanatan Goswami also speaks about the intimate connection between Jagannath and Utkal,² *rājyam utkalam pālayan svayam* — "Jagannath personally protects the kingdom of Orissa."

Muslims at Ratha-yatra

There are Muslims in Orissa who respect Jagannath and take part in the festival of *Ratha-yātrā*. The following are a few excerpts from a 2006 article printed in the Times of India called, "Muslims Join Orissa's Chariot Festival":



Photos by Sri Govinda Das

"Reports spoke of some 800 Muslims joining the celebrations in the village of Deulasahi in Kendrapada district [of Orissa], for instance, like in previous years. The Muslims of the village, which has a population of 2,500, also contributed funds for the event, said Sameshar Khan, a villager."

"The village collectively forms a committee to organize the festival every year and our community are also members," he said. This year, one of the villagers, Naeem Ali, donated a tree for constructing the chariots. Some Muslim carpenters also pitched in on building the chariots.



Muslim and Hindu friends take Jagannath *prasādam* together in Puri

...All the Muslim residents of Deulasahi gave a helping hand as the chariots rolled out — on roads that were liberally layered with sand by all the villagers so that the wheels move smoothly despite the rain of the past few days.

The story was repeated in other villages like Narayanpur in Subarnapur district where Muslims contributed funds, helped in building and then pulling the chariots, former local body chief Ananda Satapathy said. Similarly, in Motu in Malkangiri district, all 50 Muslim families wear white clothes and help out - just like their compatriots in other parts of the state.³

Aside from the above, another way Muslims pay respect to Lord Jagannath is respecting his remnants. At the Kabir Ashram in Puri, it is common to this day for Muslims and Hindus to sit together and take Jagannath *mahā-prasāda*.

Buddha

Lord Jagannath is also considered by some to be a deity of Buddha. From the time of British rule in India, a number of academics have put forward theories that Jagannath was originally a Buddhist deity. Although modern scholars⁴ tend to dismiss most of these ideas as lacking cogent evidence, there is undeniably an old tradition in Orissa connecting Jagannath



Jagannath as the ninth incarnation in a carving of the ten incarnations over the gate of the temple in Puri

with Buddha.⁵ The Oriya writer Sisu Krishna Das wrote a famous book called *Deuḷa Tolā* that describes the origin and pastimes of Lord Jagannath. He writes therein that after Nila Madhava disappeared, Maharaja Indradyumna was very disturbed. Then he heard an aerial voice, saying, "O King, I shall incarnate in *Kali-yuga* as Buddha."

Similarly, Sarala Das writes in his Oriya version of the *Mahābhārata*, *madhya-parva*:

*saṁsāra janāṅku tāribā niminte
bauddha-rūpe bijaya karichanti jagannāthe*

For the purpose of delivering the souls entangled in the cycle of birth and death, Lord Jagannath has manifest as Buddha.

The presence of the form of Jagannath as the ninth incarnation in various carvings in the Jagannath Mandir of the ten incarnations of Vishnu further illustrates that many people in Orissa consider Jagannath and Buddha to be one.⁶ One such carving is seen over the front entrance of the lion gate of the temple. Another is found inside the *jagamohana*, the *kīrtana* hall of the Jagannath temple, on the left side of the *garuḍa-stambha*.

Guru Nanak

There is also a connection between Lord Jagannath and the Sikh tradition. The local history in Puri describes that when Guru Nanak⁷ once went to enter the Jagannath Mandir, the priests thought that he was a Muslim and refused him entrance. Guru Nanak then went to the seashore where he began meditating on Jagannath. That evening in a dream, Lord Jagannath is said to have instructed Maharaja Prataparudra to stop the morning and evening worship ceremonies in the temple so that he would be able to listen to the prayers that Guru Nanak was offering him. The next morning, the king and a group of temple priests went to see Guru Nanak. While speaking with Guru Nanak about Jagannath, the king asked him if he was not feeling bad about not being allowed in the temple. Guru Nanak showed the palm of his hand to the king, who saw there the forms of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra. Apologizing profusely, Maharaja Prataparudra and the priests invited Guru Nanak and his followers into the temple for *darśana*. To this day, Sikhs are not barred entry to

the temple, and many Sikhs visit for *darśana* of the Lord. The famous Gurudwar in Puri, called Bauli Saheb or Baulimath, is said to have been established on the site where Guru Nanak offered prayers to Jagannath.⁸

Ganesh

Every year following Lord Jagannath's *Snāna-yātrā* — his public bath on the anniversary day of his original installation — Lord Jagannath dresses up in his *Hātī-veśa*, "elephant dress". The tradition in Puri, as described in the Oriya book *Dāḍhyatā-bhakti*, is that this dress is offered in memory of Jagannath's manifesting the form of Ganesh before a *gaṇeśa-bhakta* named Ganapati Bhata.

The *Nilādri-mahodaya* (14.85) describes the *Hātī-veśa*:

*harau samarṣya mālyaiś ca nānā-puṣpa-kulodbhavaith
kari-śreṣṭhākṛtīṭayā veśam ca kārayet tadā
etādyśam balasyāpi veśam kuryān nṛpottama*

Having offered to Hari a flower garland made of various kinds of flowers, one should then dress him as Ganesh, the best of elephants. One should also dress Baladev in the same way, O best of kings.⁹

Shiva

There are also some devotees who connect Lord Shiva with the three presiding deities of Puri. The local Orissan *Purāṇa* known as *Virāja-kṣetra-mahātmya* (19.97), as well as the Oriya *Mahābhārata* composed by Sarala Das (*Muṣālī Parva*, page 112), both identify Lord Balaram with Shiva.

Other examples of this conception are found in Lord Jagannath's change of body ceremony known as *Nava-kalevara*.¹⁰ During that elaborate procedure, three trees that are to become the new deities in Puri are selected, cut, and given a ritual bath. At the bathing ceremony, the brahmins recite the *puruṣa-sūkta* prayers for Lord Jagannath, the *śrī-sūkta* prayers for Subhadra¹¹ and the *Rudrādhyāya* prayers to Shiva for Baladev.¹²

Again, the conception of Lord Baladev as Lord Shiva arises when they put a special dress on Lord Baladev known as the *Hari-hara-veśa*. This takes place every year from the 11th day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Āśvina* to the 10th day of the bright fortnight in month of *Kārtika*. In this costume,



Jagannath's elephant dress in Puri

half of the body of Balabhadra looks blackish while the other half looks whitish — with the idea that he is half Vishnu (Hari) and half Shiva (Hara).

Again, a connection between Lord Balaram and Shiva is found at the time of *Ratha-yātrā*, when every year various forms of Lord Shiva are placed as side deities on Taladhvaj, the cart of Lord Balaram. This conception of Balaram as non-different from Shiva is not surprising for the followers of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, which describes Sankarshan, Balaram, as being the original source of Mahadev.¹³

Nrisimha

Many people in Orissa consider Lord Jagannath to be a deity of Nrisimhadev, the fierce half-man, half-lion form of the Lord. This conception is supported by its adherents in a number of ways. For example, the *Skanda Purāṇa* (5.2.2.28) describes that during their installation ceremony, Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra manifested themselves as Nrisimhadev in the presence of Brahma, Maharaja Indradyumna, and all the people there. Lord Brahma then initiated Maharaja Indradyumna into the *nṛsimha-mantra* known as *mantra-rāja*:

*ugraṁ vīraṁ mahāviṣṇuṁ jvalantaṁ sarvatomukham
nṛsimhaṁ bhīṣaṇaṁ bhadrāṁ mṛtyor mṛtyuṁ namāmy aham*

I bow down before all-powerful, frightening, auspicious, sublimely ferocious Lord Nrisimha, who is



Deity of Nrisimha from Jagannath's *Ratha-yātrā* cart

the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vishnu, who burns like fire, whose faces are everywhere, and who is the death of death personified.¹⁴

The *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, literally “drum chronicle”, which is the official historical record of the worship of Jagannath,¹⁵ gives the same *nṛsimha mantra-rāja* as the mantra to be used for worshipping Lord Jagannath.¹⁶

Another evidence of the connection of Jagannath with Nrisimha is in the deity known as Adi Nrisimha, who has a small temple to the right side of Jagannath’s temple in the Sri Mandir complex. He is considered to be the guardian deity of the Jagannath temple, and all activities of cooking or worship are begun by first worshipping him.¹⁷

Lord Nrisimhadev is also prominent at the time of *Nava-kalevara*, the festival/ceremony in which Jagannath changes his body to a new one fashioned from a special tree. The *Nava-kalevara* has two aspects; the *vanayāga*, forest sacrifice, and the *pratiṣṭhā*, ceremonial installation of the deity. Nrisimhadev is the presiding deity of both of these segments of *Nava-kalevara*, and until the deities are formally consecrated, the *dārus*, simple, preliminary tree forms of Jagannath, his brother and sister, are all considered and worshiped as Nrisimha.¹⁸

Daru-brahma

Lord Jagannath is also conceived of as *dāru-brahma*, a sacred wood or tree form of the Absolute. *Mahā-puruṣa-vidyā* is a little known Sanskrit book glorifying Purushottam Kshetra, Jagannath Puri.¹⁹ *Mahā-puruṣa-vidyā* stresses Jagannath as the deity for this age, and gives an interesting definition of the word *dāru*, “wood”. The famous scholar on the subject of Lord Jagannath G. K. Tripathi comments on this definition:²⁰

The shape of Jagannath is the primeval shape of Vishnu out of which his various incarnations proceed, and his body consists of *dāru* because in this form the deity ‘cleaves asunder’ (*dār*) the miseries of the world and ‘imparts’ (*ruḥ*, from the Sanskrit root *rā*, to give) eternal bliss. It further asserts that though the stone statues might be effective in granting wishes, etc., in the first half of the day of Brahma, in the current second half of the day (i.e. in this *Śveta-varāha-kalpa*) it is the image of *dāru* (wood) which really fulfils the desires of the devotees and makes them *jīvan-mukta* (3.140-143).

The *Mahā-puruṣa-vidyā* (3.147, and 6.6.) states:

*dāraṇāt sarva-duḥkhānām akhaṇḍānanda-dānataḥ
padmajāhaṁ sadā dāruḥ saṁśayo nāsti cātra vai*

“Because of breaking apart all miseries and because of imparting uninterrupted bliss, I am always called *dāru*, O lotus-born one. There is no doubt in this regard.”

*dārayaty eva duḥkhāni dadāty ānandam avyayam
tasmāt svabhāvato dāruḥ ena vedenu niścitam*

“He breaks apart miseries and imparts everlasting bliss. Thus, being of such a nature, he is called *dāru* in the Vedas.”

The Pancha-sakhas

The understanding of Lord Jagannath held by the five Orissan associates of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu known as the *pañca-sakhas* defines yet another conception. The *pañca-sakhas* — Achyutananda Das, Jagannath Das, Balaram Das, Ananta, and Yasovanta — are considered by their followers to be incarnations of Krishna’s associates, Sudama, Srivatsa, Subal, Sridama and Subahu respectively.²¹

The *pañca-sakhas* and their followers consider Lord Jagannath to be supreme, and see Krishna as his partial incarnation. In his Oriya version of the *Bhāgavata*, Jagannath Das has described:



The tree from 1996, which became the current deity of Jagannath



An early British conception of *Ratha-yātrā*

*jagannātha ye ṣoḷa kalā, tahuṁ kaḷāe nandabalā
kalāku ṣoḷa kalā kari, gope varile narahari*

Of Jagannath's sixteen *kalās* (parts or expansions), Krishna is one. In Vraja, the *gopīs* are worshipping that one expansion, the human-like Krishna.²²

The *pañca-sakhas* believe that the reason why the form of Jagannath is unique in all of India is because Jagannath is the original *svarūpa*, form, of Vishnu.²³ Achyutananda Das writes in *Śūnya-saṁhitā* (chapter 8) that Lord Jagannath is the subject of the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra*. He says that of the sixteen names in the mantra, the eight occurrences of "hare" are associated with Balabhadra, the four of "kṛṣṇa" with Jagannath, and the four of "rāma" with Subhadra.²⁴ Amongst the many complex beliefs of the *pañca-sakha* theology, they consider the real and topmost form of the supreme to be "void personified".²⁵ They say that when the Lord desires for creation to take place, he then manifests the form of Jagannath, whose form and black color are also interpreted as *nirākara*, the void.

Although, Balaram Das and Jagannath Das' names are listed in the *Vaiṣṇava-vandanā* of Devakinandan Das²⁶ there is no other mention of any of the *pañca-sakhas* in any of the other literatures of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* followers of Sri

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Similarly, in the Oriya writings of the *pañca-sakhas* and their followers there is little or no mention of the *Gauḍīya* devotees. Even the most intimate *Gauḍīya* devotees who hail from Orissa such as Ramananda Ray, Sikhi Mahiti, and Madhavi Devi are either only very briefly touched on or not named at all. As noted in our article on the life of Madhavi Devi,²⁷ the reason for this may be the vast difference in philosophy of the *Gauḍīya* devotees and the *pañca-sakhas*.

Krishna

The *Skanda*, *Brahma*, *Padma* and *Nārada Purāṇas* all have sections glorifying Puri and Lord Jagannath. These *Purāṇas* mostly address Jagannath as Krishna, but they also sometimes refer to him as Vishnu. Jagannath is also commonly addressed throughout Oriya devotional literature both as Vishnu and Krishna. Some *vaiṣṇavas* don't consider any difference between Vishnu and Krishna; others consider Vishnu to be the topmost form of the Lord and Krishna to be his expansion.

The system of worship of Jagannath at the Puri temple identifies him as Krishna. The *pūjā-paddhatis*, scriptures describing the details of worshipping Lord Jagannath, recommend meditating on him as Krishna in four different ways at different times of the day as follows:²⁸



Madan Mohan, the representative of Jagannath used for various festivals

Morning (prātaḥ): Jagannath is conceived of as baby Krishna with soft reddish feet and palms and wearing golden ornaments. Endowed with a sweet smiling face, he is envisioned crawling around in the courtyard of Nanda Maharaja's palace with a lump of butter in his hand.

Noon (madhyāhna): Jagannath is meditated upon as Krishna sitting on a divine lotus of eight petals on a jeweled throne under a wish-fulfilling tree in Vrindavan, surrounded by various gopīs and cowherd boys, as well as different sages, yogis, gandharvas and apsarās.

Dusk (sandhyā): Jagannath is thought of as sitting on a deerskin in a palace garden in Dwarka speaking philosophy to Narada Muni and others.

Late night (rātri): Jagannath is meditated on as the lover of the gopīs, sporting with them on the banks of the Yamuna in Vrindavan during the rāsa-līlā.

Another of the many indications that Jagannath is seen as Krishna is the many deities of Krishna enacting various pastimes in Vraja found on the outside walls of the

Jagannath temple. These include Krishna's rāsa-līlā with the gopīs, the lifting of Govardhan Hill, and the killing of the demons Dhenukasura, Bakasura, and Aghasura. Others depict his departure for Mathura in a chariot with Balaram and dancing on the hoods of the serpent Kaliya, etc.

An important way to understand the conception of a worshiper is by the *mūla-mantra* that is used during the worship. Every worshipable form has his or her own specific *mūla-mantra*. There are two *mūla-mantras* that have been used in Puri for Jagannath for hundreds of years up to the current time: the ten syllable, "gopī-jana-vallabhāya svāha" and the eighteen syllable, "klīm kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya svāha"²⁹ — both of which address Jagannath as Krishna with the gopīs.³⁰

Source of all Incarnations

According to the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (1.3.28), Krishna is considered to be *svayam-rūpa* and *avatārī*, the original form of the Lord who is the source of all *viṣṇu-tattva* expansions. In many places Lord Jagannath is described as *avatārī*. The *Skanda Purāṇa* (2.2.15.33) has recorded Narada Muni's

words to King Indradyumna about the greatness of Lord Jagannath:

*nānā-tīrtheṣu deśeṣu kṣetreṣāyataneṣu ca
amśāvatāras tasyaiva mā bhūt te saṁśayo 'nyathā*

Incarnations in various places of pilgrimage, regions, and places are his partial incarnations. Do not doubt this, O king.

In Srila Sanatan Goswami's *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.5.211), Narada Muni speaks to Gopa Kumar about Lord Jagannath in Puri:

*sarvāvatāraika-nidhāna-rūpas
tat-tac-caritrāṇi ca santanoti
yasmai ca roceta yad asya rūpaṁ
bhaktāya tasmai khalu darśayet tat*

His transcendental form, the one source of all incarnations, expands all of his various pastimes. Whichever of his forms a devotee finds attractive, that form the Lord shows to him.

Similarly, Srila Lochan Das Thakur has written in his *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* (sutra-khaṇḍa, text 487) *yata avatāra, tāra āśraya-sadana* — "Lord Jagannath is the resting place of all divine incarnations."

Jagannath's position as *avatārī* is also shown in his many *veśas*, dresses, in which he is decorated both as various *viṣṇu-avatāras* and *svayaṁ-rūpa* Krishna. Other vivid examples of the conception of Jagannath as *avatārī* are found in the ancient traditions of dance, music, and sculpture connected to the Jagannath temple. As elaborated in the article in this issue "Gita-govinda Thakur", since even before the time of Mahāprabhu, Jagannath has relished Srila Jayadev Goswami's *Gīta-govinda*, a part of which is the *Daśāvatāra-stotra*. As mentioned above, in several places of the Puri temple one will find carvings of Krishna's principal ten incarnations.

Deity for this Age

As we have described, the scripture *Māhā-puruṣa-vidyā* declares Lord Jagannath to be the deity for this age. This is supported by the statement of the *Padma Purāṇa*:³¹ *catvāras te kalau bhāvyā hy utkale puruṣottamāt* — "In the age of Kali, the four *vaiṣṇava* disciplic successions will appear in Utkal from the Supreme Lord, Purushottam Jagannath."

This conception has also been declared by Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (madhya 15.134-135):³²

*'dāru'-jala'-rūpe kṛṣṇa prakāṣa samprati
'daraśana'-'snāne' kare jīvera mukati*

"In this Age of Kali, Krishna is manifest in two forms, wood and water. Thus, by enabling the conditioned souls to see the wood and bathe in the water, he helps them become liberated.



The source of all incarnations

*'dāru-brahma'-rūpe — sāksāt śrī-puruṣottama
bhāgīrathī hana sāksāt 'jala-brahma'-sama*

"Lord Jagannath is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of wood, and the river Ganga is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of water."

Lord Jagannath allows and accepts the worship of all. In that sense, all of the various conceptions of Jagannath described above are correct. This is Krishna's nature, as stated by him in the *Gītā* (4.11), *ye yathā mām prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham* — "I reciprocate with everyone according to how they surrender unto me." A similar point is made by Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur in his *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (madhya 23.465), *je rūpa cintye dāse sei rūpa haya* — "According to the conception the devotee has of the Lord, the Lord manifests himself." Lord Jagannath's mood is thus described in the *Skanda Purāṇa* (5.2.2.23.67): *dharmi-grāha-pramāṇena yādṛg dṛṣṭah sa eva saḥ* — The Lord appears exactly according to the inclination of the worshiper to serve him.

Mahabhava Prakash

The above conceptions of the Lord are all based on the various moods of the devotees, but they don't directly address what the Lord thinks about himself. In 1994, Sri Srimad

Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja began speaking, for the first time in the West, a little known story of Orissa that illuminates the inner mood of the Lord.³³ This story has been elaborately told in Maharaja's book, *The Embankment of Separation*. Briefly summarized: Krishna in Dwarka was feeling so much intense separation from his loving devotees in Vrindavan, in particular the *gopīs* and Srimati Radharani, that he once fell unconscious. When Narada Muni began singing about the Lord's Vrindavan pastimes, Krishna regained external consciousness and immediately jumped on his chariot to return to Vraja. Upon arriving, Krishna saw the pitiful yet ecstatic condition of Srimati Radharani, who was suffering terribly in separation from him. Seeing Radharani's topmost love for him, Krishna himself became ecstatic. And, as Maharaja points out, since there is no difference between *deha* and *dehī*, the body of the Lord and the Lord himself, Krishna's inner feelings became manifest externally. His eyes grew big, his arms and legs shrunk into his body, and his mouth stretched into a great smile — the form of Lord Jagannath.³⁴

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami further explains this ecstatic *mahā-bhāva-prakāśa* of Lord Jagannath: "Sri Jagannath is *mādhurya-rasa-ghanāyita-mūrti*, the condensed form of conjugal mellow. Jagannath is Krishna feeling the pangs of separation from Radha and the *vraja-gopīs*, *rādhā-viraha-vidhura*."³⁵

Opulence and Sweetness

At this point another question arises: How can Jagannath be Vrajeswar Shyamasundar Krishna, the enchanting Lord of Vraja, if he is worshiped with great opulence? Devotees knowledgeable in the science of *rasa* know that for sweetness to be present, the awe and grandeur of *jñāna* and *aiśvarya*, knowledge and opulence, must not be prominent. As Kaviraj Goswami describes in Cc. *madhya* 19.194, *aiśvarya-jñāna-prādhānye saṅkucita prīti* — "When opulence is prominent, love of Godhead becomes somewhat crippled."

Yet, Lord Jagannath in Puri is surrounded by opulence! He is married to the original goddess of fortune, Mahalakshmi. His temple is called the Sri Mandir, the temple of Lakshmi. In his storehouse he has vast riches, including fantastically expensive diamonds and jewels which are regularly used to ornament him. Take, for example, Lord Jagannath's golden dress known as *Sunā-veśa*. On the day of the *Bahudhā-ratha*, return *Ratha-yātrā*, Kalia Jagannath, the beautiful black Lord of the Universe, returns to the Sri Mandir after his sojourn at the Gundicha. After Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra arrive in their cars near the Lion Gate of the Jagannath Temple, they are ornamented with

extravagantly opulent golden jewelry. The three deities wear golden hands, feet and crowns. It is said that the total weight of the solid gold ornaments of the *Sunā-veśa* worn by the deities is more than one ton.

Considering that Lord Jagannath is surrounded by such opulence, some Vaishnavas consider Lord Jagannath to be the Vāsudev expansion of Krishna who performs pastimes in Dwarka. Kaviraj Goswami describes in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 19.192-193):

*punaḥ kṛṣṇa-rati haya duita prakāra
aiśvarya-jñāna-miśrā, kevalā-bheda āra*

Attachment for Krishna is divided into two categories. One is attachment with awe and reverence, and the other is pure attachment without reverence.

*gokule 'kevalā' rati — aiśvarya-jñāna-hīna
purī-dvaye, vaikunthādye — aiśvarya-pravīna*

Pure attachment without reverence is found in Golok Vrindavan. Attachment in which awe and reverence are prominent is found in the two cities Mathura and Dwarka, and in Vaikuntha.

Yet, Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami has explained that Jagannath in Puri is something more than just the opulent Lord of Dwarka. He states in *Embankment of Separation*, "... because *aiśvarya* and *mādhurya* are combined together, Jagannath is *aiśvarya-mādhurya-yugala-milana śrī jagannātha*."³⁶

In his *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.5.212), Srila Sanatan Goswami has also described the simultaneous sweetness and opulence found in Jagannath and Jagannath Puri Dham:

*śrī-kṛṣṇadevasya sadā priyam tat
kṣetram yathā śrī-mathurā tathāiva
tat-pāramaiśvarya-bhara-prakāśa-
lokānusāri-vyavahāra-ramyam*

As Sri Mathura is dear to Lord Krishnadev, so this place is also dear to him. Although the Lord displays his *pāramaiśvarya*, supreme opulence, in his pastimes there, at the same time they are *ramyam*, very beautiful and charming.

Although, as stated above, the nature of knowledge and opulence is to make love shrunken, *prīti-saṅkucita*, the uniqueness of Puri is that rather than making love crippled, the opulence and knowledge there act to enhance and intensify it. This is seen in the mood of the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas* at the *Ratha-yātrā* festival. The opulence of Puri acts to increase the *Gauḍīya* devotee's ecstasy when they take Jagannath away from the Dwarka-like blue mountain of Nilachal to the sweet Sundarachal Vrindavan of the Gundicha.

This vision of Jagannath is also to be found in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and the other biographies of Sri Chaitanya



Mahaprabhu, which are full of descriptions of how he saw Jagannath as Vrindavan Krishna who had left and gone to Dwarka.³⁷ Mahaprabhu thus saw in Jagannath a mixture of Vrindavan sweetness and Dwarka opulence — *aiśvarya-mādhurya yugala-milana śrī jagannatha*.

Jagannath and Chaitanya

In text 137 of the first chapter of the *śeṣa khanda* of *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, Srila Lochan Das Thakur quotes the following verse, which he accredits to the *Vāyu Purāṇa*:

*kaleḥ prathama-sandhyāyām lakṣmī kānto bhaviṣyati
dāru-brahma samīpantah sannyāsau gaura-vigrahaḥ*

In the beginning of *Kali-yuga*, Lord Narayan will appear on the earth in a golden form. Taking *sannyāsa*, he will reside in Purushottam Kshetra near Lord Jagannath.

There is a special relationship between Jagannath and Sri Chaitanya. It is significant that Jagannath was the main deity worshiped by Mahaprabhu. Many of his associates in Puri had deities that they worshiped there, including Tota Gopinath, who was worshiped by Srila Gadhadhar Pandit; Sri Sri Krishna Balaram, worshiped by Bhagavan Das and Chota Haridas; Madhavi Devi's Radha Gopinath; the Radha Damodar deities of Swarup Damodar Goswami; Radha Giridhari worshiped by Jagadananda Pandit; Sri Sri Radha Vrindavan Chandra worshiped by Kahnai Khuntia; and Sri Sri Radha Madan Mohan worshiped by Srila Raghunath Das Goswami, etc.³⁸ Yet aside from some brief mention of Mahaprabhu going to receive the *darśana* of Tota Gopinath and Alarnath³⁹ in Brahmagiri, there is no description found of his going for *darśana* of deities other than Jagannath. However, the biographies of Sri Chaitanya in Puri describe extensively about his daily and often multiple daily *darśanas* with Lord Jagannath. Srila Lochan Das Thakur states in his *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala*, (*madhya* 42.213), that Gaurasundar was going for *darśana* of Jagannath three times a day.

In this connection, it is interesting to analyze Gaura's stay in Sri Rangam, South India. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*⁴⁰ states that while there Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was going daily to receive the *darśana* of Lord Ranganath, the presiding deity of Sri Rangam. However, there is also a temple in Sri Rangam of small deities of Jagannath, Baladev, and Subhadra that, according to the local tradition, were personally worshiped by Mahaprabhu during his stay there.⁴¹ There are two local histories regarding these deities. Some hold that Mahaprabhu made them with his own hands; others say that he brought them with him when he came



Photo by Caitanya Daya Das

Deities worshiped by Lord Chaitanya in Sri Rangam



Opposite page: Mahabhava Prakash Jagannath, the condensed form of conjugal mellow

to Sri Rangam. Judging from their forms which are quite different from the general form of Jagannath deities in Orissa, it is clear that they were specially made.

Two facts are significant about these deities. One is that even while visiting this major pilgrimage site and receiving daily *darśana* of the famous and ancient deity of Ranganath, Mahaprabhu was still absorbed in worshipping Lord Jagannath. And, aside from these Jagannath deities in Sri Rangam and the Govardhan Shila that was given to Mahaprabhu by Shankarananda Saraswati, worshiped by Sri Chaitanya, and later given to Raghunath Das,⁴² we are not aware of any other deities that are said to have been personally worshiped by Mahaprabhu.⁴³

Why did Mahaprabhu place so much stress on the deity of Jagannath? Why not Radha Krishna?

In *Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam* (page 321) Srīla Kavi Karnapur relates a discussion wherein Maharaja Prataparudra asked Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, "Since Vrindavan is the dearest place to the Lord, why did he stay there such a short time and then return here to Puri?"

Sarvabhauma replied, *jagannāthena tad-viraham asahamānena samākṛsta iva* — "He was drawn back because he could not bear the separation of Lord Jagannath."

All Important Radha

As described above, Gauranga's worshipable Lord is Jagannath, whom he sees as Vrindavan Krishna. But, understanding that, an all-important question arises — where is Srimati Radharani?

According to the *siddhānta* of the *Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas*, one cannot approach Krishna without Radharani. Dhyana-chandra Goswami, the disciple of Srīla Gopal Guru Goswami, has written in text 188 of his *Gaura-govindārcana Smarana-paddhati*:

*vinā rādhā-prasādena kṛṣṇa-prāptir na jāyate
tataḥ śrī rādhikā kṛṣṇau smaranīyau su-samyutau*

Without the mercy of Radha, one can never attain Krishna. Therefore one must remember them together, as they are always nicely situated by each other's side

In the *Sva-niyama Daśakam* of his *Stavāvalī*, Srī Chaitanya's intimate associate Srīla Raghunath Das Goswami has described the mood of the followers of Gauranga Mahaprabhu. In text six he states:

*anādrīyodgitām api muni-ganair vanika-mukhaiḥ
pravīṇāṁ gāndhārvāṁ api ca nigamais tat priyatamām
ya ekam govindam bhajati kapaṭi dāmbhikatava
tad-abhyarṇe śirṇe kṣanam api na yāmi vrataṁ idam*

Not for a moment shall I go near a hypocrite who worships only Lord Govinda and does not worship exalted

Jagannathastakam

The *Jagannathastakam* is one of the most popular prayers offered to Jagannath, and is recited every day in the temple in Puri. For hundreds of years, its verses have also been a favorite of the followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. *Jagannāthāṣṭakam* gives an important indication of Mahaprabhu's conception of Lord Jagannath.⁵¹ The first two verses clearly describe Jagannath as Shyamasundar Krishna of Vrindavan:

*kadacit kālindī-tata-vipina-saṅgītaka-ravo
mudābhīrī-nārī-vadana-kamalāsvāda-madhupah
ramā-śambhu-brahmāmaya pati-gaṇeśārcita-pado
jagannāthah svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

Sometimes in great happiness Lord Jagannath makes a loud concert with his flute in the groves on the banks of the Yamuna. He is like a bumblebee tasting the beautiful lotus-like faces of the cowherd damsels of Vraja, and great personalities such as Lakshmi, Shiva, Brahma, Indra, and Ganesh worship his lotus feet. May that Jagannath Swami be the object of my vision.

*bhuje savye venum śīrasi śikhī-piccham kaṭi-tate
dukūlam netrānte sahacari-kaṭākṣam vidadhate
sadā śrīmad-vrindāvana-vasatī-līlā-paricayo
jagannāthah svāmī nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me*

In his left hand Lord Jagannath holds a flute, on his head he wears peacock feathers, and on his hips he wears fine yellow silken cloth. From the corners of his eyes he bestows sidelong glances upon his loving devotees. He is most fond of the pastimes he conducts while living in his divine abode of Vrindavan. May that Jagannath Swami be the object of my vision.

Srimati Radharani, who is glorified by the Vedas and the great sages headed by Narada, and who is most dear to Krishna. This is my vow.

Radha is apparently not worshiped with Lord Jagannath. Yet, even if Jagannath is Krishna, without Radharani's presence, Raghunath Das says that he is not interested:

*sadā rādhā-kṛṣṇocchalad-atula-khelā-sīhalu-yugam
vrajam santvajyaitad yuga-virahito 'pi trutim api
punar dvārāvatyām yadi-patim api praudhu-vibhavaḥ
sphurantam tad-vācapī ca na hi calāmiksītum api*

Even though I suffer in long separation from the divine couple, I shall not, even for a moment, ever leave Vraja. Even if Krishna in Dwarka personally asks me to come, I won't go there.

*gatonmādaḥ rādhā sphurati harinā śīṣṭa-hṛdayā
sphutam dvārāvatyām itī yadi śṛṇomi śruti-tate
tadaham tatraivodhata-matī patāmi vraja-purat
samuddīya svāntādhika-gati-khagendrād api jāvāt*

Yet if I hear that Srimatī Radharanī has gone to Dwarka, where Lord Hari passionately embraces her to his chest, then with an excited heart I will leave Vraja and fly to Dwarka faster than Garuda.⁴⁴

Based on these above verses, further questions arise: why do the followers of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu even bother to visit Jagannath Puri, a place that has opulence like that of Dwarka and where Radharanī is not worshiped with Jagannath?

One may say, "I go there, because in Puri, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has performed pastimes in the mood of Srimatī Radharanī." That is true, but the mood of Mahāprabhu in Puri is the tasting of Radha's crying in separation from Krishna. Why would we want to see Radha outside of Vraja in that condition?

Naturally, the followers of Mahāprabhu want to see her happily by the side of Krishna in Vrindavan. But if they see her in a crying condition then they are overwhelmed with a desire to alleviate her suffering, putting aside any other considerations.

This point is made by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī, who is said to have stated, "Shallow thinkers appreciate Vrindavan, but a man of real *bhajana*, real divine aspiration, aspires to live in Kurukshetra."

He explained that after visiting many places of pilgrimage, Śrīla Thakur Bhaktivinode commented that he would like to spend his last days in Kurukshetra. He said, "Kurukshetra is the real place of *bhajana*."

Why did Bhaktivinode ask to go to Kurukshetra? Why not Radha Kund or somewhere in Vraja? The goal of the followers of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is Vrindavan, not Kurukshetra.

Bhaktivinode went there because he understood that Radha had gone to Kurukshetra at the time of the solar eclipse to be with Krishna. But in Kurukshetra, Srimatī was in a difficult position. She was surrounded by Krishna's wives and all of his kingly opulence. There was no Yamuna River present, no Vamsavatī, and no Govardhan Hill. Therefore, it is commented that Bhaktivinode wanted to go to Kurukshetra because he saw that Radha's need there was the greatest, and he felt that where the need is the greatest, service is the most appreciated.⁴⁵

In his purport to Cc. madhya 13.120, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda explains how Jagannath Puri is like Kurukshetra:

After giving up the company of the gopīs in Vrindavan, Śrī Krishna, the son of Maharaja Nanda, engaged in his pastimes at Dwarka. When Krishna went to Kurukshetra with his brother and sister and others from Dwarka, he again met the inhabitants of Vrindavan. Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is *rādhā-bhāva-dyuti suvalita*, that is,

Krishna himself assuming the part of Srimatī Radharanī in order to understand Krishna. Lord Jagannathdev is Krishna, and Śrī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is Srimatī Radharanī. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's leading Lord Jagannath toward the Gundicha temple corresponded to Srimatī Radharanī's leading Krishna toward Vrindavan. Śrī Kshetra, Jagannath Puri, was taken as the kingdom of Dwarka, the place where Krishna enjoys supreme opulence. But he was being led by Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to Vrindavan, the simple village where all the inhabitants are filled with ecstatic love for Krishna.

Radha and Jagannath

A question remains: How could Śrī Gaurasundar, being in the mood of Radharanī, be attracted to a form of Krishna if Krishna's beloved consort Śrī Radha is not present with that form?

Or — is she?

According to the sixth verse of *Jagannāthāṣṭakam*, Radharanī is situated in an embrace with Jagannath:

*para-brahmāpidaḥ kuvalaya-dalotphulla-nayano
nīvāsī nilādrau nihita-carano 'nanta-śirasī
rasānando rādhā-sarasa-vapur-ālingana-sukho
jagannāthaḥ svāmi navana-paṭha-gāmi bhavatu me*

Lord Jagannath, whose eyes resemble full-blown lotus petals, is the last limit of the absolute. He is a resident of Nilachal Hill and his lotus feet are placed on the heads of Anantadeva. Overwhelmed by the mellows of love, he joyfully embraces Srimatī Radharanī's body to his chest. May that Jagannath Swami be visible before me!

References to Srimatī Radharanī's presence with Lord Jagannath in Puri can also be found in several other little known ceremonies during the worship of Jagannath. Very few people are aware of the esoteric details of the rituals involved in the *Nava-kalevara* ceremony where Lord Jagannath's body is changed. After the tree that will become the new deity of Jagannath has been selected and cut down, the priests place special mantras known as *nyāsas* on the log as part of the process of spiritualizing the wood and bringing the deity to life. The tradition in Puri is that towards the end of placing the *nyāsas* on the *dāru*, the priest meditates on Srimatī Radharanī and places the following *sodhā-nyasa* mantra six times on the log:

*smetasam kamaṇābhām sphurad-adhara-pata-prānta-kṛpāveguntām
ramyam veśena veni-kṛta-cikura sikhālambi-padmaṁ kiśorīm
tarjanyāṅguṣṭha ruktyā hari-mukha-kamale yuñjatiṁ naga-vallī-
pamam karmāvataksm tri-bhuvana-ruciram rādhikām bhavayami*

I meditate on Rādhikā who is the most beautiful girl in the three worlds. She has a smile on her face and

her complexion is the color of *kunkuma*. Her veil is made with the border of her splendid lower cloth. Her dress is delightful and a lotus hangs at the end of her braid. She appears wonderful in her fresh youth, and her eyes extend to her ears. With her thumb and index finger she is placing a betel leaf into the lotus mouth of Hari.⁴⁶

Apart from the deities of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra, there are a number of small deities in the Puri temple that have important ceremonial roles. Amongst them is a tiny and little known deity called the *śayana-vigraha*, the deity that sleeps. This *mūrti* is made of solid gold and, being the combined form of Lakshmi-Narayan, is also known as *ardha-nārī-īśvara*, or *ardha-lakṣmī-hari*, (half Lakshmi, half Narayan). The *ardha-nārī-īśvara* deity is a representative of Lord Jagannath, considered non-different from him. The seated deity has eight arms, four hands of which are holding a conch, club, disk, and lotus, the symbols of Vishnu, and four holding a lotus, mirror, book, and pot full of gems, the symbols of Lakshmi.

Śāradā Tilaka Tantram describes this form as follows:

*vidyut-candra-nibhaṁ vapuḥ kamalajā-vaikunṭhāyor ekatām
prāptam sneha-vaśena ratna-vilasat-bhūṣā-bharāṇakṛtam
vidyā-panikajā-darpanāt maṇi-mayam kumbham sarojam gadām
śaṅkham citram amūṇi bibhrad amitām diśyāt chṛtyam vah sada*
He is of the color of lightning and the moon. Half of his body is Vaikuntha (Vishnu) and the other half is Kamala (Lakshmi). This union is due to mutual affection. He is adorned with numerous gem-set ornaments. He is carrying in each of his eight hands a book, a lotus, a mirror, a pot full of gems, another lotus, a club, a conch-shell and a discus. May he create boundless auspiciousness for all of you.

A number of things about this deity are noteworthy. First of all, the use of gold. The deities in the Jagannath Mandir are basically made from wood, as in Jagannath, Baladev, Subhadra, and some of the temporary festival deities, or from copper or *aṣṭadhātu*.⁴⁷ Gold is the color of the Lord's consort Lakshmi-devi, and Srimati Radharani's bodily complexion is like molten gold, as indicated in her *pranama-mantra*: *tapta-*



Jagannaths' nightly dress of great conjugal love

kāñcana-gaurāṅgi. Gold is also the color of the topmost level of love of God. Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami has commented in *Embankment of Separation*:

When we speak about *prema*, it has a gradual development. The first rise of *prema* is called *rati*. When *rati* becomes more and more condensed, it develops into *sneha*, *māna*, *pranaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, and *bhāva*. Then comes *mahābhāva*, which further develops into *rūḍha-mahābhāva*, *adhīrūḍha-mahābhāva*, *modanākhyā-mahābhāva*, and then *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva* — the topmost. This is the gradual development of *prema*. When *prema* has developed to the stage of *anurāga*, its complexion is the color of the rising sun, *arūṇa-varṇa*. When *anurāga* becomes more condensed it becomes *bhāva* and then *mahābhāva*. The color of *mahābhāva* is golden, *gaura-varṇa*. So Vṛṣabhānu-nandini, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu-raj, is *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva-mayī*. The color of that *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva* is molten gold. Therefore Radharani is *tapta-kāñcana gaurāṅgī*, the color of molten gold.⁴⁸

The role this deity has in the Jagannath Mandir is also significant. It further illustrates the hidden and intimate identity of Lord Jagannath. In the late evening, when Jagannath is meditated upon as Krishna with the *gopis* performing *rāsa-līlā*, Jagannath dresses in his *Baḍa-śṛṅgāra-veśa*, literally "the dress of great conjugal love".⁴⁹ It is considered that at this time Srimati Radharani and the *gopis* personally come

to have *darśana* of the Lord. The last *arati* of the day, named after this dress, is the *bada-śṛṅgāra-dhūpa*. After that ceremony is finished, around 11:45 to 12:00 at night, this deity is brought from the *bhaṇḍāra-ghara*, storage room, by the priest known as *bhaṇḍāra-mekāpa*. Sandalwood paste is offered to *ardha-nārī-śvara*, and then the deity is placed on the throne near Lord Jagannath. Next, the Lord's beds known as *ratna-pālankas*, are placed in front of their Lordships, while, traditionally as per the order of Mahaprabhu's associate Maharaja Prataparudra, the *Gīta-govinda* is sung and another *sevaka* known as the *vmakara*, plays the *viṇā*. This ceremony is known as *khata śeja lāgi, viṇā o gana*. The *Śayana Thākura* is then offered some coconut water and placed to sleep in the bed of Lord Jagannath. After placing the deity there, the *sevaka* then brings the *śayana thākura* deity back to the *bhaṇḍāra-ghara*, then everyone is cleared out of the temple and the doors are locked. This ceremony of closing the temple is known as *pahuda, muda* or *śodha*.⁵⁰

Union in Separation

In a lecture given on his last visit to Alarnath, Orissa, on the morning of 18 May 1934, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur described, "Sri Kshetra, Jagannath Puri Dham, is *vipralambha-kṣetra*, the place of separation."⁵¹ Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami has similarly described the nature of Puri and Jagannath:

Mahaprabhu is feeling the pangs of separation from Krishna and always crying, *rorudhya māna*. Gaura is crying for Krishna and Jagannath is crying for Radha. Two crying forms are there in Jagannath Kshetra. Therefore that *kṣetra* is known as *vipralambha-kṣetra*, crying *kṣetra*. *Kṛṣṇa-viraha-vidura* and *rādhā-viraha-vidhura*. Two *viraha-vidhuras* meet together in Purushottama Kshetra. So we should understand who is Gaura, who is Jagannath, and the strange meeting between these two ... Gaura is crying for Krishna and Jagannath is crying for Radha. Two are crying in the ecstatic mood of *mahābhāva*.⁵²

The exalted nature of *vipralambha* is described in these words of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, (*śṛṅgāra-bheda-prakarana*, text 3):

na viṇā vipralambhena sambhogāḥ puṣṭim aśnute
kaśāyite hi vastrāḍau bhūyān rāgo vivardhate

Just as one cannot redden cloth or some other object without the use of red dye, in the same way the happiness of conjugal love cannot reach its fullness without there having been separation of the lovers.

There is no question of separation between Radha and Krishna. According to the philosophy of the *Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas*, what appears to be external separation is actually internal union. Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami describes:

When we speak of *viraha*, separation, it is the topmost level of *prema*. Because in *viraha*, separation, you cannot describe the *ānanda* you get, the pleasure you get in the heart. *Viraha* means external separation, but internal union. This union is in the heart. Externally Krishna is away, but internally he is in the heart, internal union. That is *viraha*.⁵³

This is Mahaprabhu's teaching. The more you cry for Krishna, the more your love increases for Krishna and the more you feel his presence in the core of your heart. That is external separation with union in the heart. That is *viraha, vipralambha-bhāva*. Krishna crying for Krishna is Gauranga. Krishna crying for Radha is Jagannath. *mādhurya-rasa-ghanāyita-mūrti jagannātha* — Lord Jagannath, the condensed form of conjugal mellows.⁵⁴

Text thirty-one of the *Yugala-kīśora-antottara-śata-nāma-stotram* (108 names of the youthful divine couple), spoken by Lord Shiva in the *Rāsollāsa-tantra*, describes one of the names of Krishna as *rādhikā-hṛdayaṅgama* — he who always lives in the heart of Radha. Similarly, the same verse describes one of the names of Radha as *govinda-hṛdayaṅgamā* — she who always lives in the heart of Govinda.⁵⁵ Similarly, Srila Jiva Goswami states in his *Yugalāṣṭakam* prayers (texts 4-5):⁵⁶

kṛṣṇa-drava-mayī rādhā rādhā-drava-mayo hariḥ
jīvane nidhane nityam rādhā-kṛṣṇau gatir mama

Radha is totally melted with Krishna and Hari is totally melted with Radha — in life or in death, Radha and Krishna are my eternal shelter.

kṛṣṇa-gehe sthitā rādhā rādhā-gehe sthito hariḥ
jīvane nidhane nityam rādhā-kṛṣṇau gatir mama

Radha is situated in the body of Krishna and Hari is situated in the body of Radha — in life or in death, Radha and Krishna are my eternal shelter.

Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada has written in the introduction to his *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*:⁵⁷

Radha and Krishna are one, and when Krishna desires to enjoy pleasure, he manifests himself as Radharani. The spiritual exchange of love between Radha and Krishna is the actual display of the internal pleasure potency of Krishna. Although we speak of "when" Krishna desires, just when he did desire we cannot say. We only speak in this way because in conditional life we take it that everything has a beginning; however, in the absolute or spiritual life there is neither beginning nor end. Yet in order to understand that Radha and Krishna are one and that they also become divided, the question "When?" automatically comes to mind. When Krishna desired to enjoy his pleasure potency, he manifested himself in the separate form of Radharani, and when he wanted to understand himself through the agency of Radha, he united with Radharani, and that unification is called Lord Chaitanya.

Mirror of the Heart

Jagannath is seen and understood in so many ways by so many devotees. Yet when the Lord wants to see himself, how does he do so?

Krishna asks, "What is my beauty?" But how can he understand it? Can you see your own face? You may see the face of someone else, but to see your own face the help of a mirror is required. Then you can see your own face, but that is only a reflection. A mirror reflects and you see the reflection. How can Krishna see his beauty? What kind of mirror is required? *sat-prema-hṛdaya-darpana* — The heart is a mirror, *darpana*, and *sat-prema-hṛdaya* is the heart of a *premi-bhakta*, one who has developed completely pure love. So the heart of such a *premi-bhakta* is a mirror and in that mirror Krishna sees his form. But that is not a reflection. In a mirror you may see the reflection, but in the heart of a *premi-bhakta*, in the mirror of pure love, Krishna sees himself.... In English *prati-bimba* means reflection, but Krishna never sees the *prati-bimba*; Krishna sees the *bimba*. In other words, he sees himself. Not *prati-bimba*, but *bimba*. That is *sat-prema-darpana*. The heart of a *premi-bhakta* is such a mirror where Krishna sees himself. And the best mirror is the heart of Srimati Radharani.⁵⁸

In Jagannath Puri, the heart of Gaura Ray is a golden mirror wherein the Lord of the universe finds delight in his own image of Vraja Mohan Krishna, the enchanter of Vrindavan. 🌸



Painting from Haridas Thakur Samadhi in Puri

The mirror of Radha's emotions

Notes

- 1 This triples during years when the change of body festival, *Nava-kalevara*, takes place.
- 2 Utkal is another name for Orissa.
- 3 This article was reprinted at: <http://www.hinduismtoday.com/modules/xpress/hindu-press-international/2006/06/29/muslims-join-orissas-chariot-festival>.
- 4 See Prabhat Mukherjee, pages 15-18; and Susil Chandra De, pages 4-16.
- 5 This tradition is still strong today, as can be seen in the 3,000 page Oriya book called *Buddha Purāṇa* written by Nakulananda Nayak, a former professor of Utkal University.
- 6 In the standard lists of ten incarnations, Buddha is the ninth incarnation.
- 7 Guru Nanak is the founder of the Sikh religion.
- 8 P. K. Panda, page 61, and Gitarani Praharaj, page 107.
- 9 For more information on this dress see the article "The Meticulous Dresser", in *Sri Krishna Kathamrita* magazine, issue 4.

- 10 Every two years and eight months, on the average, there is a leap (extra) month in the Vedic calendar. When this leap month occurs between the *Snāna-Yātrā* and *Ratha-Yātrā* festivals — generally, every 19 years — the bodies of the deities of Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra are changed. This event is known as "*nava-kalevara*", on the occasion of which the old deities are retired and new ones are fashioned. For more information, see our article, "*Nava-kalevara — Lord Jagannath's 'Change of Body' Pastime*", in *Sri Krishna Kathamrita* magazine, issue 4.
- 11 Although generally identified in the *Purāṇas* as Yogamaya, Subhadra is addressed in *Skanda Purāṇa* (5.2.2.19.45) as being a deity of Lakshmi.
- 12 Eschmann, Kulke, and Tripathi, page 257.
- 13 See *Bhāg.* 5.17.16, and 5.25.3.
- 14 This mantra is quoted or at least referred to in many scriptures. The *Nṛsiṃha Tapāni Upaniṣad* states that just as in the present creation the presiding deity is Sri Krishna and he initiated

Brahma into the *kāma-gāyatrī*, in the previous creation the presiding deity was Lord Nṛsiṃhadev and he initiated Lord Brahma with the *nṛsiṃha-mantra*. It is also said that Śrīla Thakur Bhaktivinode initiated his son Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur with this mantra.

15 On page 14 of his masterful work, *Communication with God*, Gaya Charan Tripathi describes the *Mādaḷā Pāñji* as being a sort of chronicle of the Jagannath Temple, containing the history of the rulers of Orissa in relation to the Jagannath temple, a record of the rights and duties of the temple priests, the details of the various festivals observed in the temple, a daily record of the donations received in the temple, etc. It derives its name from the fact that it is inscribed on long palm-leaf sections, which are then bound together with a string in form of bundles resembling the shape of a *mādaḷā* drum. The *Mādaḷā Pāñji* has not been officially kept since the late 1950's, although there are still *karaṇas* keeping unofficial records, which today are done with paper and pen.



Unknown artist. Gita Press, c. 1950

Jagannath is Krishna's form of separation from Radha

16 G. C. Tripathi, page 15.

17 K.C. Pattanaik, page 95-98.

18 A. Eschmann, page 171.

19 G. K. Tripathi, page 27, states that there are only four manuscripts of this book known to exist.

20 Page 26.

21 This list is according to Isvara Das' Oriya *Caitanya-bhāgavata* and Achyutananda Das', *Śūnya-saṁhitā* (canto 27). According to Kavi Karnapur's *Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, Sudama came in *gaura-līlā* as Sundarananda, Subal came as Gauridas Pandit, Subahu as Uddharan Datta, and Sridama as Abhiram Thakur.

22 There are dozens if not hundreds of different versions of Jagannath Das' work. Not all of them include this verse. However, the

conception herein is a common one amongst the followers of the *pañca-sakhas*.

23 Cited by G. C. Tripathi in his article, "Jagannath: The Ageless Deity of the Hindus". Eschmann et al. Page 487.

24 R. C. Mishra, pages 64-65.

25 *Śūnya-saṁhitā*, chapter 9.

26 For more about Devakinandan Das and his writings, see the article, "A Short History of the Poet Devakinandan Das" *Sri Krishna Kathamrita*, issue 6.

27 Madhavi Devi, *The "Half" Most Intimate*.

28 K. C. Mishra, page 150; and G. C. Tripathi, page 260.

29 Balaram's mantra is: *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*; Subhadra's: *hrīm*; and Sudarshan's: *om sahasrāra huṁ phaṭ*.

30 G. C. Tripathi, page 14. Mr. Tripathy also comments, "These mantras seem to have been introduced in the temple worship of Jagannath in the second half of the 15th century during the reign of Purushottamadev. Page 24.

31 This verse is cited by Baladev Vidyabhushan in *Prameya-ratnāvalī* 1.5.

32 Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came as a devotee *ācārya* in this age. Kaviraj Goswami therefore describes him as *bhakta-rūpa*, Krishna in the form of a devotee (*Cc. ādi. 1.14*). Similarly, the followers of Thakur Bhaktivinode cite the following verse accredited to Srila Jagadananda Pandit:

*sādhu pāoā kaṣṭha baṛa jīvera jāniyā
sādhu-guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa āila nadiyā*

In Kali-yuga it is very difficult to find a genuine *sādhū*. Therefore Krishna appeared as a *sādhū-guru*, taking birth in Nadia. (*Prema-vivarta* 7.8).

33 The story told by Gour Govinda Swami is known to a number of scholars and savants in India, and particularly in Puri. However, to date we have not been able to find its original source. Some suggest that it was part of the book *Mahā-bhāva-prakāśa* written by Mahāprabhu's Oriya associate Kahnai Khuntia (Spelled "Kānāni Khuṭiyā" in *Cc. madhya* 15.19). An incomplete manuscript of this book was discovered and printed by the Orissan scholar and devotee Dr. Fakir Mohan Das in 1981. Like the story told by Gour Govinda Swami, the book *Mahā-bhāva-prakāśa* focuses on how Jagannath's form is the manifestation of the greatest feelings of devotional ecstasy. Therein, the author Kahnai Khuntia says that the information of this book was heard directly by him from the lotus mouth of Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Also similar to the mood of the story related by Gour Govinda Maharaja, chapter two of *Mahā-bhāva-prakāśa* describes Ray Ramananda's request to Mahāprabhu to speak about the nature of Radharani's love for Krishna. Unfortunately, most of the book is missing, and the pastime told by Gour Govinda Maharaja is not found in the existing portion. So we are unable to state confidently what is the origin of the story.

34 See also Maharaja's article "The Ten Stages of Separation" in this issue.

35 *Embankment*, page 87.

36 *Embankment*, page 87.

37 For one example, see *Cc. madhya* 1.76-86.

38 Other deities include Sri Sri Radha Rasik Raj worshiped by Maharaja Prataparudra. Also, Kashi Mishra's wife, Adwaita Acharya, Narahari Sarkar, and Abhiram Thakur, all worshiped Radha Krishna deities. All of the above deities, with the exception of Swarup Damodar's Radha Damodar, are still present today in or nearby Puri.

39 Oriya spelling, from the original "alvara-nātha", Lord of the Alvars.

40 *Madhya* 9.87.

41 It should be noted that outside of Puri, there is no history of worship of Lord Jagannath in the *Śrī-sampradāya*, giving further credence to the tradition that these deities were worshiped by Mahāprabhu.

42 See *Cc. anṛya* 6.288 to 301.

JAGANNATH'S SANNYASI FORM

Srila Kavi Karnapur's

Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam

Śeṣa-khaṇḍa, chapter 3

One day when Maharaja Prataparudra was looking at Lord Jagannath, he saw that the Lord had become Sri Chaitanya, the greatest of *sannyāsīs*. "What am I seeing?" thought the king. Then, to confirm his vision, he asked the *pūjārī*, "What are you seeing?" The *pūjārī* said, "I am seeing Lord Jagannath."

The king replied, "I don't want to disappoint you, but I'm seeing a *sannyāsī* sitting on the throne of Lord Jagannath. Perhaps fearing my punishment, you are saying you don't see anyone except Lord Jagannath. Now tell me the truth, what are you seeing?"

The *pūjārī* said, "I'm sorry, I don't see anything but Lord Jagannath."

King Prataparudra thought to himself, "Then why am I only seeing a *sannyāsī* with my eyes? I've heard unlimited glories about this *sannyāsī*. Now let me find out for myself."

Then he went to visit Lord Gaurāṅga, the greatest of the *sannyāsīs*. He found Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and his followers sitting in the Tota Gopinath temple, chanting the names of Hari and talking about Vrindavan.

The next time the king took *darśana* of Lord Jagannath, he again saw Chaitanya Mahāprabhu instead of Lord Jagannath. Gaurāhari looked like the effulgent golden Mount Sumeru. Astonished, the king became convinced that Lord Jagannath had now incarnated as a *sannyāsī*.

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•
dvāv eva pūrṇa-karuṇau jagad-uddiṣṭṛsūr
dvāv eva locana-patham jagato jihānau
antaḥ-sṭha-nanda-tanayo 'ntara-vartī-dāru-
brahmeti kevalam iyān ubhayor hi bhedaḥ

They are both full of mercy. They both yearn to deliver the entire world. Although they appear as two persons before the eyes of this world, there is in truth no difference between Lord Chaitanya, who is, internally, the son of Nanda Maharaja, and Lord Jagannath, the wooden form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. (6.25)

43 Other than these two, there is no description given in any of the authorized biographies.

44 *Sva-niyama Daśakam* texts 3-4.

45 Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Maharaja, pages 174-175.

46 G. C. Tripathi in his article "Navakalevara" from the book, *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, page 258.

47 A mixture of eight metals.

48 *Embankment*, page 47.

49 For more details on this dress, see the article in this issue, *Gita Govinda Thakur*.

50 Describing the significance of the deity of

ardha-nārī-īśvara, K. S. Behera, a professor of history and an authority on the tradition of Lord Jagannath states, "Jagannath represents the *ekī-bhūtam vapuḥ* [combined form] of Vishnu and Lakshmi." Page 78.

51 For more from this lecture, see the article "The Esoteric Significance of the Deity of Ālārnāth-dev" in *Sri Krishna Kathamrita*, issue 5.

52 *Embankment*, page 117.

53 *Last Limit of Bhakti*, page 75.

54 *Mathura Meets Vrindavan*, page 123.

55 *Dasarath Suta*, page 146.

56 *Ibid*, page 198.

57 Page 28.

58 Embankment, page 12.

SI There is some dispute about the authorship of *Jagannāthāṣṭakam*. Many of the older manuscripts say that it was written by Adi Shankaracharya, other manuscripts indicate that it was spoken by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. It seems very unlikely that it was composed, or originally spoken by Sri Chaitanya, as there are no commentaries on the prayer nor are any of the verses cited in any of the standard biographies about him. Compare that to the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* prayers, which are accredited to Mahaprabhu. There are dozens if not hundreds of commentaries on *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, and verses from it are quoted in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and later works of the Gaudīyas. In any case it is widely accepted that the verses were appreciated by Mahaprabhu.

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